

CHAPTER IV

INSTINCTS

THE body of an animal may be likened to an elaborate piece of clock-work which is driven by a number of powerful main-springs living concealed within it. The surface of the machine bears a number of little starting levers, each adjusted to respond to the slightest touch and to start the machinery by releasing a main-spring that is connected with it. Some of the main-springs are always, so to speak, wound up : an unexpected crash will, for instance, make us start at any time. Others become tense only at intervals, if one is not hungry the sight of food is not attractive. Subject to this qualification an impulse is directly and inevitably aroused by the sensation that is connected with it. So considered, a living creature closely resembles a machine : and this is the condition of an animal, such as an insect, which is guided by directive instinct, when it is acting under the influence of its instinctive guide. It also represents the process by which our internal organs perform their functions. The stomach secretes its digestive fluids immediately it is touched by food.

But in the case of animals that are endowed with memory we must expand our illustration. An impulse may be aroused by a recollection as well as by a sensory impression. The sight of a rat